

## Episode 32

### ***Islahi Ta'alluq*<sup>1</sup> and Baiyah with Hazrat Dr Abdul Hayy Sahab Arifi**

**(may Allah's mercy be upon him)**

As a result of my respected father's (may Allah's mercy be upon him) teachings, guidance and upbringing, it had become manifest to me that merely learning letters and words through books is insufficient for reformation of one's character, and that normally one's actions and character are not reformed without undergoing practical training under the mentorship of a spiritual guide. Our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him) would often narrate stories of his relationship with his elders and would diligently bring us along to visit contemporary pious elders. It was a result of this that Alhamdulillah from my childhood itself I received the honour of meeting Hazrat Allama Shabbir Ahmad Sahab Usmani, Hazrat Allama Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvi, Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahab Amritsari, Hazrat Maulana Khair Muhammad Sahab, Hazrat Maulana Shah Abdul Ghani Sahab Phoolpuri, Hazrat Maulana Sayyid Muhammad Yusuf Binnori, Hazrat Dr Abdul Hayy Arifi, Hazrat Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Sahab Madani, Hazrat Maulana Rasool Khan Sahab, Hazrat Baba Najam Ahsan Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon them all) and innumerable other pious elders. As a consequence, with the grace of Allah Ta'ala the importance of the company of the pious was entrenched in my heart, and from childhood itself the heart was filled with certitude that establishing a formal *Islahi Ta'alluq* with a *Shaikh* is necessary. Initially, my heart was greatly inclined towards Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon him). Our respected father had exhorted us to diligently visit him whenever we visited Lahore. Alhamdulillah I acted upon this advice, but I was so young at the time that I could not muster up the courage to request Hazrat for *Islahi Ta'alluq* or *Baiyah*. In the meanwhile, Hazrat passed away while I was

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<sup>1</sup> Translator: *Islahi Ta'alluq*: A mutual relationship between a *Shaikh* (mentor) and a seeker in which the seeker would seek advice from the *Shaikh* for his *Islah* (moral reformation) without formally becoming *Baiyah* to the *Shaikh* at this point.

still a child. Nonetheless, in 1955 Allah Ta'ala bestowed the honour of studying under Hazrat in an extraordinary and fortuitous turn of events, which I have described previously.

After completing the *Dars-e-Nizami* syllabus from Darul Uloom, the urge to establish *Islahi Ta'alluq* with a pious elder burgeoned in my heart. In those days, our respected father's weekly *Islahi*<sup>1</sup> gathering used to take place in our house itself. Alhamdulillah I was blessed with regular attendance in that gathering. Our respected father (may Allah's mercy be upon him) would normally read or have someone else read the sayings of Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Sahab Thanvi (may his secret be sanctified) in that gathering and would thereafter expound upon them. I remember that when I mentioned that gathering to my teacher Hazrat Maulana Mufti Rasheed Ahmad Sahab (may Allah's mercy be upon him), he advised: "When you sit in Hazrat's gathering, do not sit with the thought that he is your father; rather sit with the thought that he is a pious elder who is close to Allah. You will reap more benefit if you sit with this intention." Alhamdulillah I thereafter sat with this intention, and it was through this gathering that with the grace and benevolence of Allah Ta'ala my heart developed a natural affinity with the teachings of Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah (may Allah's mercy be upon him). In those days, when the thought of establishing *Islahi Ta'alluq* would come to mind, the heart would spontaneously voice out: "What is the need to look elsewhere when, with the grace and benevolence of Allah Ta'ala, our own house is a river of blessings in the form of our respected father?" My relationship with my respected father was not merely that of a father and a son, rather Alhamdulillah my heart was also filled with devotion towards him, and I would feel every word of his finding its way into the depths of my heart. For this reason, one time I presented my request for *Baiyah* to him. He replied: "Though there are precedents of a father doing *Baiyah* to his son, it is quite difficult to fulfill the rights of this relationship together with the rights of being a son, and normally this relationship of being a son becomes an

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<sup>11</sup> Translator: *Islahi* gathering: A gathering in which a *Shaikh* (spiritual mentor) imparts teachings to seekers for reformation of character.

impediment towards benefitting and receiving benefit. It is therefore more appropriate to establish *Islahi Ta'alluq* with someone else."

Hazrat Dr Abdul Hayy Arifi (may Allah sanctify his secret) was among the distinguished spiritual successors of Hazrat Hakeem Ul Ummah, and our respected father would recite the following couplet of the late Asghar Gondvi regarding him:

خطِ ساغر میں رازِ حق و باطل دیکھنے والے

ابھی کچھ لوگ ہیں ساتی کی محفل دیکھنے والے

Translation:

O the one who looks at the line of the goblet to differentiate truth from falsehood

There still remain those who have witnessed the gathering of the cup-bearer

And sometimes the following couplet:

مجھے دیکھ آئینہ یار ہوں میں

جلا کردہ حسنِ دلدار ہوں میں

Translation:

Look at me, I am a mirror of my friend

I have been polished by the beauty of the beloved

Our respected father and Hazrat Dr Sahab would meet regularly, and through this we also got opportunities to present ourselves in his service. However, until now we had not established a formal *Islahi Ta'alluq* with Hazrat. At long last, our respected father recommended us to establish *Islahi Ta'alluq* and do *Baiyah* with him. To this end, one day in 1389H (circa 1969) he took me and my honourable brother Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafi Sahab (may his

shade be extended) in Hazrat's service and requested Hazrat to accept our *Baiyah* to him. Hazrat treated this request with his usual love and kindness, and instructed us to visit him alone the next day. We presented ourselves in his service the next day and Allah Ta'ala blessed us with doing *Baiyah* at his blessed hands.

Hazrat's weekly gatherings used to take place on Fridays. Alhamdulillah, after *Baiyah* we regularly attended this gathering every week. Later on, Hazrat began another weekly gathering on Mondays especially for us seekers. Alhamdulillah, for years upon years we were blessed to regularly attend this gathering as well. Besides these gatherings, we also presented ourselves in Hazrat's service at other times as needed and especially to receive Hazrat's guidance for any important matters. And at the same time, with the grace and benevolence of Allah Ta'ala, we also continued informing Hazrat about our spiritual states and receiving Hazrat's instructions and trying to act upon them through *Islahi* correspondence as well.

Allah Ta'ala honoured us to establish *Islahi Ta'alluq* with Hazrat for seventeen years. When I look back upon those seventeen years, a wondrous panorama of unending graces and favours and love and kindness from Hazrat unravels itself. Every time we presented ourselves in Hazrat's service, it felt as if he were restlessly anxious to somehow pour into us the teachings that he had acquired from his *Shaikh*. May Allah forgive me; my conduct throughout this period consisted entirely of negligence upon negligence. However, Hazrat's extraordinary benevolence forced some teachings into me such that Alhamdulillah the correct understanding of *Tasawwuf* became ingrained in my mind. Alhamdulillah, I have preserved the letters I wrote to Hazrat for my reformation as well Hazrat's inspirational and touching replies (each of which left indelible imprints on my heart), and to this day they are a beacon of light for me. I present a few of those letters below, which should be beneficial for everyone:

One time I wrote to Hazrat:

"The doubt remains in the heart regarding our actions, i.e. how do we ascertain that our intentions are correct, especially when it is sometimes witnessed, and the texts also point to this, that many a times the action itself is good but the intention is wrong due to which the

action goes to waste. It is due to this that diligently safeguarding one's intentions is emphasized in the Prophetic sayings. Regarding this, what is the way to be diligent in safeguarding one's intentions? Though we say that our intention is correct, the heart fears that these may be just hollow words. Intention, which is an action of the heart, cannot be performed by merely articulating some words through the tongue. And when I survey my heart, I see other thoughts as well together with correct intention. In this case, how can one be satisfied about correctness of one's intentions?"

Hazrat wrote in his reply: "When it is understood that intention refers to the heart's motive, it follows that our daily routines often take place through these motives of the heart though we are not actively aware of this. It is not necessary to renew one's intention at each moment. If the thought comes during an action that this action is being done for show, then this is a baseless doubt because the action was not started with the intention of show. However, the action which is done with the intention to show off from the start, that is pure *riya* (ostentation). Intention cannot be changed in the middle of an action, rather the action should be completed and afterwards these thoughts can be compensated for by seeking Allah's forgiveness."

Regarding my question: "And when I survey my heart, I see other thoughts as well together with correct intention. In this case, how can one be satisfied about correctness of one's intentions?" Hazrat replied: "Intention is a voluntary action while mere thoughts and doubts are involuntary, therefore they are not taken into account and there is no need to worry about them. "

In another letter, this lowly one wrote to Hazrat: "The heart was quite affected by Hazrat's insightful talk about "*Ujb*<sup>1</sup>" and "*Kibr*<sup>2</sup>" last Monday. However, when I try to apply it on my own self, the thought comes that though I do not consider any of my qualities as my own excellence,

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<sup>1</sup> Translator: "*Ujb*": Vanity

<sup>2</sup> Translator: "*Kibr*": Arrogance

however, as a gift from Allah, sometimes some good qualities seem to be present in me. I thank Allah for these, but at the same time this realization of possession of good qualities also brings some enjoyment and pleasure to the heart. How can one know if this enjoyment and pleasure is *ujb* or not? If this is indeed *ujb*, what would be its treatment? And if this is not *ujb*, then I frequently get such thoughts. Should I remain satisfied with the thought that these thoughts are not *ujb*?"

Regarding the enjoyment and pleasure mentioned in this letter, Hazrat replied: "These feelings arise out of faith itself and are a sign of truthfulness." And regarding the suspicion of *ujb* in the afore-mentioned letter, Hazrat replied: "Suspicion of *ujb* is a sign of sincerity. May Allah Ta'ala bestow unending progress in sincerity. I make heartfelt supplication for you."

In the days that this lowly one was appointed as a judge in the Shariah Appellate Bench of the Supreme Court, in one of the letters I wrote: "For some time now, I have especially noticed in myself that fear of blame from people has mushroomed in my heart. I especially feel a heightened apprehension that since this lowly one got the opportunity to be involved in some matters of the government or serving in some governmental posts, that people should not begin considering me a government sycophant. Though after repeated *Istikharas* as well as receiving counsel from Hazrat, I can say from the bottom of my heart that the heart is satisfied that InshaAllah this work is correct for this lowly one for achieving religious objectives and I must continue doing it, however fear of this reproach from people often hangs heavy on the heart."

In reply to this, Hazrat wrote: "Has anyone ever actually considered so or is it merely a doubt or apprehension? If it is merely an apprehension, then no doubt it arises from *Hubb-e-Jah* (love of fame). It is obligatory to feel remorse over it and to ask Allah for forgiveness. Do you consider yourself as possessing any religious excellence or quality whose loss could be feared? This possibility can be atoned for by seeking Allah's forgiveness. The following supplication is tried and tested to be quite effective for this: "اللَّهُمَّ اقْضِ فِي قَلْبِي رَجَاءَكَ، وَاقْطَعْ رَجَائِي عَمَّا سِوَاكَ". Read this after every prayer. I make heartfelt supplications for you keeping all states of affairs in mind. May Allah the Most High protect you from all machinations of the *nafs*, and may He keep you in His protection and

safety with honour and wellbeing wherever you may be, and may He help and support you in every situation. Ameen.”

After this, this lowly one wrote: “As Hazrat has confirmed, this apprehension stems from *Hubb-e-Jah*. Due to this, there is much worry that Allah the Most High should save me from it. Whatever treatment Hazrat prescribes for this, Insha Allah I will follow it.”

Hazrat replied: “Whenever you suspect *Hubb-e-Jah*, immediately ask Allah for forgiveness and remain busy with your tasks. May Allah the Most High keep you safe and protected from the machinations of *nafs* at all times. Ameen.”

In another letter, this lowly one wrote that he had become much more worried about the above-mentioned thoughts and *Hubb-e-Jah*. To this Hazrat replied: “Do not pay any attention to anyone. Intention is in one’s own control. After *rujoo’ ilallah*<sup>1</sup> is established, do not worry about anything. Perceiving *Hubb-e-Jah* is itself the cure for it, and it can be made up for by asking Allah for forgiveness.”

One time, after returning from a visit to the Haramain Shareefain I wrote to Hazrat: “This lowly one is always engulfed with an extraordinary feeling at the Blessed Rowdah. After presenting the well-known words of *Salam* (greetings), the heart does not desire to leave too soon but no more words come to mind to say. I often just stand silently and thereafter repeat the *Salat* and *Salam* or the blessed Durood--- If Hazrat could teach the correct way of presenting *Salam*, then this confusion could be allayed for the future. I also do not know whether it is correct etiquette to remain standing there for too long?”

Hazrat wrote in his reply: “The etiquette of love is to be succinct in whatever one wants to say. It comes in narrations that the Noble Companions would stand in front of the Blessed Rowdah for a very short while --- they would present *Salam* with just the words: السلام عليك أيها النبي ورحمة الله وبركاته and would thereafter move ahead. However, in today’s times since one rarely gets the

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<sup>1</sup> Translator: *Rujoo’ Ilallah*: Turning one’s heart’s attention towards Allah

opportunity to visit, if one respectfully presents *Salam* and also makes some supplications to Allah at the same place then there is nothing wrong with it, but this should also be brief. This is my personal preference. However, sitting facing the Qibla in the direction of the blessed feet near the grill and saying whatever one wants to say or just sitting quietly, in either case this is a great blessing through and through.”

Regarding visits to the Haramain Shareefain, I wrote to Hazrat: “Since the stay in the Haramain Shareefain was quite short this time, this lowly one did not inform anyone of his visit in both the blessed cities except a few individuals. This was so that whatever time was available could be spent inside the Haramain. Due to this some individuals complained, and the thought also arose in the heart as to whether the rights of relationships were not being correctly fulfilled with this mode of action. I would like to request Hazrat to instruct the correct mode of action in such situations.”

Hazrat replied: “I personally do not like to inform anyone of my arrival there so that maximum time can be spent inside the Haramain Shareefain. However, it is also naturally inappropriate to ignore close acquaintances. For this, some brief time from one’s schedule could be allotted only to particular acquaintances, so that the mind does not get distracted. One does not visit those places to fulfill the rights of relationships, and neither are those rights among the obligatory rights.”